

3 ranging from 1-2, inclusive, and y ranging from 0-3, inclusive.

1 48. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the coating layer has a  
2 composition including a substance from the chemical family  $\text{SiO}_x\text{N}_a\text{H}_b$ , with x  
3 ranging from 1-2, inclusive, a ranging from 0-1, inclusive, and b ranging from 0-1,  
4 inclusive.

1 49. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the coating layer has a  
2 mechanical hardness less than a corresponding mechanical hardness of the wafer.

1 50. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the coating layer has a  
2 mechanical hardness less than a mechanical hardness of silicon.

1 51. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the coating layer has a  
2 thickness in the range of 10-100 micrometers.

1 52. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the coating layer has a  
2 thickness in the range of 1-10 micrometers.

1 53. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the coating layer has a  
2 thickness in the range of 0.05-1 micrometers.

1 54. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the coating material on the  
2 wafer support surface has a thickness of 10-100 microns.

1 55. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the wafer support surface  
2 has a surface area no larger than a surface area of a wafer configured to be  
3 positioned on the wafer support surface.

1 56. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the wafer support surface  
2 includes a plurality of support structures.

1 57. (New) The apparatus of claim 56, wherein the support structures are  
2 point contact structures.

1 58. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the wafer support surface  
2 includes a vacuum ring.

1 59. (New) The apparatus of claim 59, wherein the vacuum ring is a line  
2 contact vacuum ring.

1 60. (New) An apparatus of claim 45, further comprising a skirt positioned  
2 at a periphery and in a non-planar relationship to the wafer support wafer surface.

1 61. (New) The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the wafer support surface  
2 provides a mechanical support for a wafer and the skirt is positioned to be in a non-  
3 mechanical supporting position relative to the wafer.

1 62. (New) The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the skirt is sized to permit a  
2 wafer positioned on the wafer support surface to extend beyond a periphery of the  
3 skirt.

1 63. (New) The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the skirt and wafer support  
2 surface are sized to be at least equal to a size of a wafer positioned on the wafer  
3 support surface.

1 64. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, further comprising at least one  
2 wafer transporter coupled to the process chamber.

### CONCLUSION

Applicant makes the above amendments to put the claims in better condition for examination.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 8003-391 for any fees due in connection with this paper.

Respectfully submitted,

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